Australia is the world largest exporter of sheepmeat, and is the world’s second largest producer of lamb and mutton (FAO). The off-farm meat value (domestic expenditure plus export value) of the Australian sheepmeat industry was approximately $4.83 billion in 2015-16 – up 2% on the 2014-15 period (MLA estimate).

At the time of publication, figures included in this document were the most up to date available but may be subject to revision.

Flock facts and figures:
- There were 39.35 million breeding ewes one-year and older as at 30 June 2015 (ABS Agricultural Commodities 2014-15).
- Prime lamb producers are predominately located in the Riverina, the wheat-sheep zone of NSW, the Victorian and NSW Murray region and the high rainfall areas in south-west Victoria and eastern South Australia. Sheep are primarily located in south-west WA, south western part of Victoria and the southern part of NSW.
- The sheepmeat industry accounts for 32% of all farms with agricultural activity (ABS Agricultural Commodities 2014-15).

People in the industry:
- Around 200,000 people are employed in the red meat industry, including on-farm production, processing and retail (MISP 2020).

How much is produced?
- In 2015-16, Australia produced 516,366 tonnes cwt of lamb and 196,040 tonnes cwt of mutton (ABS).

What is the value of production
- The gross value of Australian lamb and mutton production in 2015-16 is estimated at $3.3 billion (ABARES Agricultural Commodities June 2016).
- Lamb and mutton production (including live exports) contributed 6% of the total farm value of $57.8 billion in 2015-16 (ABARES Agricultural Commodities June 2016).

Domestic value and consumption:
- Domestic expenditure was approximately $2.2 billion on lamb and $110 million on mutton in 2015-16 (MLA estimate).
- Australians ate around 9.5kg of lamb and 0.7kg of mutton per person in 2015-16 (MLA Estimate) – among the highest sheepmeat consumption in the world.
- Around 81.9% of Australian households purchased lamb in 2015-16 (AC Nielsen Homescan).
Export value and volume:

- In 2015-16, Australia exported 56% of total Australian lamb production and 91% of total Australian mutton production (DA, ABS).
- The value of total lamb exports in 2015-16 was $1.78 billion and the value of mutton exports was $700 million (ABS/GTA).
- Australian live sheep exports were valued at $228 million in 2015-16 (ABS).

Australia’s place in the world:

- Australia produced approximately 8% of the world’s lamb and mutton supply in 2013 (FAO).
- Australia is the largest exporter of sheepmeat in the world (FAO 2013).
- Australia is the world’s third largest live sheep exporter (FAO 2013).